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# THE TECHNIQUE OF BRIDGING GAPS IN THE ACTION OF GERMAN DRAMA SINCE GOTTSCHED

## PART I: UNTIL THE DEATH OF LESSING

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In *Romeo and Juliet* Friar Laurence explains to Juliet and to us his plan to summon Romeo to rescue his bride from the Capulet tomb. Balthasar brings his master the news of Juliet's death and burial, but no message reaches Romeo from the Friar. Instead, in Act V, scene ii, Friar John, the messenger, relates to Laurence his attempt and failure to communicate with Romeo.

Now the actual placing of Juliet in the tomb and the miscarriage of the Friar's plan are necessary to the dramatic action. Nevertheless they do not take place upon the stage. Were they omitted entirely, they would leave gaps in the action of the play. Such "gaps in the action" upon the stage are filled out or "bridged" by a narrative account or *report* of the parts of the action which do not take place before our eyes on the stage.

"Reports" of this nature are employed with remarkable frequency and from particular causes in the German drama of the time of Gottsched and Lessing. It is the province of this discussion to examine the technique used by the German dramatists of this period (in round numbers, 1730-80) to present such action to the spectator or reader; and secondly, to determine if there were innovations and important changes in methods of technique, either in the work of individuals, or between authors of different periods, or under different literary influence.

Strictly, the examination should be confined to those "reports" that add a detail without which the "action" properly so called would be incomplete. This has been the guiding principle in determining what and how much should be considered as "report," and deviations will be pointed out when they occur. Such exceptions are based upon the following consideration: there are three elements

which enter into the composition of a drama: action, character, and the author's human philosophy—his *Weltanschauung*. The "action" is, for this examination, of greatest importance. But an episode, even though "reported" and not seen, is of interest for us if it makes clear a trait of character which in turn motivates "action." Much further removed from consideration here is an episode introduced primarily to give point to the author's philosophy. More justified is the use of some part of the "dramatic action" as a background. Bodmer, for instance, contrives with the minimum pretext of "action" as a basis of "reports" to introduce a maximum amount of philosophy.

Any examination of the so-called "exposition" is excluded.

#### B. THE SCOPE OF THIS EXAMINATION

The period examined begins about the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The rising influence of Gottsched marks the gradual abandonment of the *Haupt- und Staatsaktionen* and the substitution of the dignified "regular" drama. Having no adequate German foundation to build upon, Gottsched borrowed ideas and models from the contemporary French drama, which meant at that time to a large extent Corneille. The stiff formality of the French "regular" drama was the opposite extreme from the boisterous stage of previous years in Germany. Before this time it was impossible to speak of "regular" drama in Germany. But now began a period of production, at first entirely under French influence.

With the last years of Lessing's life essential changes in the technique of narrative "reports" had taken place. Largely through his activities, French literary criteria ceased to be the only standard of perfection, and new conceptions, indicating especially English influence, were introduced into German literature and drama. There ensued a conflict of the old and new standards, of French and English ideas, in which the latter finally gained the victory. This epoch of change, almost of revolution, deserves examination as distinct from the later *development* of those ideas which did gain the upper hand; and a knowledge of this period serves as a foundation for the study of such further development. It is desirable to pause here before passing to the time of "storm and stress" and to the

classical period. It is my intention, as the title of this paper indicates, to continue the investigation upon this basis through the succeeding periods of the German drama, inasmuch as this phase of dramatic technique has to all appearance remained untouched as yet.

As will appear from the list of works studied, the texts examined were selected with the intention of making them representative, so far as they were procurable. Tragedy, comedy, operetta, and pastoral play are represented in some, at least, of the leading authors. The authors are men of various literary inclinations, from dramatist and actor-playwright to epic poet and learned professional man. They represent widely different districts of Germany, and different literary influences. While by no means complete, the list of texts examined includes those plays mentioned with most approval by contemporary critics, and those most popular at the time, together with others less so. The works of the men most important for the development of this period have been examined with especial thoroughness.

## II. THE DRAMATIC USE OF THE REPORT

### A. ITS TECHNIQUE

1. *External form: a) Monologue.*—For practical purposes “reports” may be considered in classes, as monologues or dialogues. Those scenes are reckoned as monologues where one person appears alone, or where several occupy the stage, but one speaks “aside.”

Not many examples are found of reports in the form of monologue. The reason is apparent—more especially for Gottsched and his followers, but in a modified sense for this whole period, including Lessing’s earlier work: namely, *Wahrscheinlichkeit*.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1730 Gottsched published what he had no doubt for some time taught, that the use of the monologue was a gross sin; that only seldom could even a great writer make use of the monologue without giving offense to the discerning critic, and that with a little added application and determination the author would always find that the use of the monologue might be evaded. To quote:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A term variously rendered in the following pages by verisimilitude, truthful imitation, faithful reproduction of originals, probability, as the sense seems to require. As used in the statement of theory by Gottsched, and as practiced by Frau Gottsched, *Wahrscheinlichkeit* smacks somewhat of the more modern naturalism.

<sup>2</sup> Gottsched, *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst*. 2. Aufl., II, 11, par. 19. Leipzig, 1737.

Da ich von Scenen handle, so muss ich auch der einzelnen gedenken wo nur eine Person auftritt. Bey den Alten hatten diese mehr Wahrscheinlichkeit als bey uns; weil nemlich da der Chor allezeit auf der Bühne stand, und mit für eine Person anzusehen war. Und also redete da die einzelne Person nicht mit sich selbst. Bey uns aber ist die Bühne leer; und die Zuschauer gehören nicht mit in die Comödie: Folglich hat die Person niemanden, den sie anreden könnte. Kluge Leute aber pflegen nicht laut zu reden, wenn sie allein sind; es wäre denn in besondern Affekten, and das zwar mit wenig Worten. Daher kommen mir die meisten einzelnen Scenen sehr unnatürlich vor; und ausser der ersten im Geizhalse des Molière, wüsste ich fast keine zu nennen, die mir gefallen hätte. Man hüte sich also dafür, so viel man kann; welches auch mehrentheils angeht, wenn man dem Redenden noch sonst jemanden zugiebt, der das, was er sagt, ohne Gefahr wissen und hören darf. Eben so übel steht es wenn jemand für sich auf der Schaubühne redet, doch so, dass der andere, der dabey steht, es nicht hören soll; gleichwohl aber, so laut spricht, dass der ganze Schauplatz es verstehen kann. Was hier für eine Wahrscheinlichkeit stecke; das habe ich niemals ergründen können; es wäre denn dass die anwesende Person auf eine so kurze Zeit ihr Gehör verloren hätte.<sup>1</sup>

Note that the verisimilitude here urged is in reality external and formal and confines itself to the scene presented *by* the stage, as distinguished from the scene, conceivably out of another century, presented *upon* the stage. The only attempt to support his argument by deeper reasoning sounds very naïve: "Kluge Leute aber pflegen nicht laut zu reden," as if that mere statement were final without further qualification or argument. In other respects, also, the idea of probability (*Wahrscheinlichkeit*) was applied rather to the scene of the presentation than to the presented scene. Various items of Gottsched's dramaturgical faith may be cited in support of this statement. First he argued that there could be no change of scene; how could there be? The audience could not be so suddenly transferred from one place to another. That is, in the minds of Gottsched and the other critics the action presented was so closely associated with the presentation before a fixed audience, and the fact of the

<sup>1</sup> Corneille attributes the use or non-use of monologue to custom and bears witness to the occurrence within his own time of a change of literary taste from the use to the avoidance of the monologue: "Les monologues sont trop fréquents en cette pièce [*Clitandre*]; c'étoit une beauté en ce temps là: les comédiens les souhaitoient, et croyoient y paroître avec plus d'avantage. La mode a si bien changé, que la plupart de mes derniers ouvrages n'en ont aucun. . . ."—Corneille, *Clitandre*, *Examen*, *Œuvres* (ed. Marty-Laveaux; 1862), I, 273.

presentation was so immanent in their consciousness, that the *Wahrscheinlichkeit* of the "action" was slighted, out of deference to the present occasion. Thus it was all-important that the stage should not be left unoccupied for an instant,<sup>1</sup> and that long pauses should not ensue. But apparently no improbability was felt in making a man tell his profoundest secrets in a public hallway, for example, a room with several entrances, leading to apartments occupied by persons whom it was the object of this individual to deceive, and who were likely at any moment to enter this public passageway without warning. All of these details occur in Brandes' *Gasthoff*.<sup>2</sup>

Of the same nature is the requirement of unity of time, preferably only a few hours, otherwise the audience—again the *audience*—would have to imagine itself as having eaten and slept.

In a period of formalism, the doctrine of verisimilitude (*Wahrscheinlichkeit*) appealed to everybody, and with comparatively few exceptions<sup>3</sup> monologues were avoided. The cure was simple and easy: a confidant (*Vertrauter*) was introduced, who listened willy-nilly. What Gottsched really did was to justify as well as he could by analogies with the Greek Chorus the usage which he took over from the French theater.

Gottsched followed his own rule: in his *Cato* (written 1730) by copying parts of plays which could pass the muster for unity of time and place, etc.; and later (1745), in his more original *Agis*. In the latter, the scenes II, i, V, ii, might as well have been addressed to the audience. The single reason for the presence of the second person on the stage is obvious: to secure the *form* of dialogue, that is, probability (*Wahrscheinlichkeit*). The second person has, in part, the office of the Greek Chorus, at first fifteen or even twenty in number, later reduced to three or two or even one. The Chorus is somewhat modernized, perhaps, but its characteristic features are plainly recognizable. Gottsched says of the use and purpose of the Greek Chorus:<sup>4</sup>

Diese Leute nun fanden sich bald in der ersten Handlung auf der Schaubühne ein, und behielten ihren Platz bis ans Ende des ganzen

<sup>1</sup> *Crit. Dichtkunst*, II, xi, par. 18.

<sup>2</sup> III, 5 (1769).

<sup>3</sup> Especially rare is the occurrence of monologue used to report action which has taken place elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> *Crit. Dichtkunst*, II, x, par. 7.

Spieles. Sie vertraten daselbst die Stelle der Zuschauer, die bey der Handlung, so man spielte, zugegen gewesen, als sie wirklich geschehen war.

The part of the confidant then, who was substituted for the chorus, was first of all to watch and listen—to act as audience. In short, Gottsched's theory was that in the Greek drama the chorus represented fellow-countrymen, interested listeners, an artificial audience, and psychologically, at least, the audience of the amphitheater. For the latter followed the story of the messenger with the same interest as the stage audience. In like manner in his *Agis* the second person expresses in his speeches nothing but the thoughts or feelings of a spectator or listener—of any listener, anywhere, even in the audience. For example, V, i, when Agesistrata expresses her surprise and dismay at the report that Leonidas has regained the royal power by an unexpected *coup*, her words are only those of anyone in Sparta<sup>1</sup> or anyone in the audience, who might be permitted to speak. And when Lysander concludes, she hopes, with us all, that the successful tyrant will not be too severe with the patriots. Thus the chorus character of the second person is evident. This person is in effect the spokesman for the individual public; the personified interest of the audience granted the right to speak. Sometimes the two persons exchange rôles, performing the chorus service for each other in turn. Thus in V, i, occurs a report, with "chorus," of 6+9+16+41+12 lines, excluding the rôles of the "chorus" of 4 lines each. This technique occurs often in the plays of Gottsched's imitators and pupils.

An even more striking illustration of the use of one man as "chorus" is found in Brawe's *Brutus* (1757). The old man Servilius opens Act IV, and his twenty-line monologue informs us that the battle has begun between Brutus and the enemies of the Republic. He reflects upon the situation, waiting for news of victory or defeat. Just why he waits in a place where he cannot at least look out over the battlefield we are not told. At all events, he fills the part of the Greek Chorus awaiting the event. Suddenly the tribune rushes in, sent by his superior to warn the old senator, Servilius, to flee. Very naturally the warning message must be supported by a statement

<sup>1</sup> The scene of the play.

of fact, at first short, excited, then a more detailed account (in all forty-one lines) of treachery in the army. Throughout this long report Servilius maintains his character as "chorus." The choral responses consist of exclamations, or a few simple questions, such as: "Treulosigkeit in Brutus' Heer?" The tribune is easily recognized as the messenger of the Greek play. The technique is very similar. The purely epic nature of his report is somewhat concealed by the personal interest in the message<sup>1</sup> and by the excitement of an eye-witness just come in haste from the battle. The historical present runs through the whole report, after the first sentences.

Several years earlier, Elias Schlegel in his comedy *Der Geheimnissvolle* (1746) uses one real monologue report. Abgrund, the mysterious man, suspicious of all friends, talks aloud to himself: "Schlangendorf lässt mich zu Gaste bitten! Nein, dahinter wird etwas stecken! Das muss ich ausforschen:—Aber . . . ." etc. There follow fragmentary sentences, questions, exclamations: "Ist es möglich?" "Nein!" "Sachte!" "Zum Teufel!" Coming at the first of scene and act (III, i) the short report in monologue form gives a new turn to the thought and a new impulse to the action. Abgrund proceeds to reprove himself audibly for his habit of reflecting aloud—an apology to *Wahrscheinlichkeit*, perhaps, but in this case quite in keeping with the morbidly introspective character of Abgrund.

By this time (1746) Schlegel had just about completed his emancipation from allegiance to Gottsched. He had already entered into correspondence with Bodmer and may well have allowed himself greater freedom in the use of monologue, as he did in other details of technique.

To observe the gradual movement toward freedom from the use of confidants even at the cost of using the monologue, let us examine the plays of Christian Felix Weisse (1726–1804), who begins his career as a writer of tragedies with strict adherence to the established rules.

Weisse in his *Edward III* (1758) apparently stands helpless before the necessity of bringing his action or lack of action to a close. So he requires Nordfolk to report (V, ii) how everything turned out, and forces Archbishop Seewald to stand over opposite him and listen to

<sup>1</sup> Flammius sends warning to his friend Servilius.



it all. Nordfolk begins by complaining that his own late arrival has caused the death of the king and others. Seewald politely inquires what delayed him, and upon this hint, Nordfolk launches into details and relates to him and to us the catastrophe of the action, 5+20+13 lines.

In *Richard III* (1759) Weisse introduces a short report into Richard's monologue (V, iii). Richard is just returning from the murder of the princes with his bloody dagger in his hand. The mother and sister force their way past him to the tower room where the bodies lie. Richard makes his own remarks about the person who left the door unlocked, and recalls then for us in his monologue how Tyndal did not have the heart to strike, when the princes begged for mercy. The whole monologue, including the report, is passionate and bloodthirsty, the mechanical technique correspondingly energetic.

In *Mustapha* (1761) there is one monologue report (II, i) and in *Die Flucht* (1769-70) there are two (V, i; V, ii), all three occurring under the stress of strong excitement, so that the persons are almost beside themselves temporarily. These plays, especially the last-named, were written at a time when Weisse was more familiar with English ideas coming to him through Lessing and Nicolai,<sup>1</sup> and his later dramas show distinctly in many details the desire to follow in a conservative and safe way the leadership of Lessing in introducing English dramaturgical ideas into German practice.

Thus Weisse registers a tendency (after about 1760) to substitute to a limited extent the monologue for the unmotivated confidant.

Inquiry as to whether the monologues of this period are used to communicate the progress of some severe inner conflict, of importance for the action, and impossible to transmit otherwise than by means of a monologue, must generally be answered in the negative. In *Richard III* the action reported is something external, a fact, a deed. Likewise in *Mustapha* and *Die Flucht*. In Brawe's *Brutus* (IV, i) the old Roman Servilius enters alone musing upon the battle. He reports something entirely external, which is, however, the starting-point of his following reflections. But in the monologue reports there is no inner conflict.

<sup>1</sup> Minor, *Weisse*, chap. v, 246.

Probably the most frequent use of the monologue occurs in Brandes' comedy, *Der Gasthoff* (1769). The host, Pips, has six monologue scenes, one very long, of two pages, in which he listens at a knot-hole and reports what occurs in the apartments of one of his guests. Lorchén has one of ten lines, the Baron one of nine lines, and two other characters each have one monologue. Some of these serve only as transition scenes from one situation to another. But most of them are used to communicate something; either to report what has been done, to comment upon the situation, or to give plans for the future. The host has a comical rôle, reminding one of the host in Lessing's *Minna*, who doubtless served as a pattern.

To illustrate the nature of these monologue reports: in III, v, Baron Thoreck has just spoken with Lorchén, who leaves him in uncertainty whether or not Frau von Dormin loves him or can be led to do so. In this uncertainty he meditates aloud, in the common hall or sitting-room:

Aber—wenn sie die Wahrheit gesagt hätte? Wenn auch! Wir wollen es auf kein Gerathewohl ankommen lassen. Mein Plan — — bald kömmt es zur Entwicklung. Der Befehl. . . .

and he reviews then briefly the steps last taken to remove by treachery the husband of Frau von Dormin.

Evidently the Baron has no aversion to discussing his plans on the stage for the benefit of the audience. Notice here the use of exclamations, of the dash, and of interruptions. But care is usually taken to have the sentences grammatically complete before inserting a dash or other interruption. The language is not fragmentary. In the report cited above no attempt is made at any deeper motivation of the monologue than merely to acquaint the audience with the Baron's thoughts. Certainly his character as a maker of dark plots against persons high in rank and influence would not suggest such carelessness on his part.

Now Brandes was an actor himself, and he wrote not for art's sake but for effect. Apparently for the sake of simplicity and brevity in communicating certain necessary information to the audience he chose repeatedly the simple expedient of a monologue report, which he forced to serve his purpose; although he left it as unmotivated and poorly supported as ever the confidant had been. Here therefore

over-use and abuse of the monologue replaced the bad use of confidants—so far had Brandes drifted from the versimilitude (*Wahrscheinlichkeit*) of Gottsched.

b) *Dialogue*.—The dialogue admits of a much less restricted use. And it is in this form that by far the most of the “reports” occur.

Proceeding at once to a study of the technique, the following details offer themselves for discussion: (a) the selection of characters to make “reports”; (b) the introduction of “reports”; how conducted; (c) the length of individual “reports”; (d) the number of “reports” in the drama and the proportion of “reports” to the whole; (e) the distribution of “reports” throughout the drama; (f) the use of “alarms” to accompany “reports”; (g) the employment of “false reports.”

## 2. Characters

Theoretically the selection of any particular character to make a report is closely connected with the motivation of the report itself, just as the development of the action is of necessity dependent upon the character of the action. In those dramas where action and character are most closely interdependent, there the reports which occur bear the most stamp of character, are motivated not merely externally, as reports from servant to master, from inferior to superior, or even from an eye-witness, but there is a deeper psychological urgency for the report. Thus even Eph. Krüger in his *Vitichab und Dankwart* (1746) has given us one character whose actions are well motivated as compared with others of this period. The character of Fredegunde is carried through consistently as that of a timid, loving girl. Always solicitous for those she loves, she is overwhelmed with fear and trembling when she hears of the plot to kill the prince, her betrothed, and both the manner and the matter of her report on this occasion and elsewhere are not only in harmony with her nature as indicated by other details of the action, but have their origin in her character and gain their motive force therefrom. There is here deeper motivation even than mere passive harmony of the technique and matter of the report with the character of the bearer as presented in the drama. Such motivation, if crude, is the beginning of a more psychological treatment. The deeper the psychological urgency in the character, the better motivated is the selection

of just that person to make the report. However, there is much variation in the suitability of the characters chosen for the reports. Some are quite evidently dragged in against their will. Others carry off the part well. Sometimes the characters report because the author requires it of them. The reports of others accord well with their character, their manners, speech, and actions elsewhere in the play. Gebler in his *Adelheid* (1774) uses eight persons in making twelve reports. In spite of the fact that many report and much is reported, the thing is done in an everyday, offhand way and often the narration is covered by good motivation or clever technique. Hedwig's long report (I, vi, 15 lines) about a message from a stranger to her sister-in-law harmonizes well with her jealous, impetuous nature. Or, when the servant Gotthard brings the news of Siegmar's madness he is simply doing his everyday natural duty as valet or old house servant, and his character remains consistently that of a servant. Even the part of Dahlen as Siegmar's confidant is not entirely to be condemned. He is a house friend, and is by no means so colorless as those of the old Alexandrine plays.<sup>1</sup> He feels, and tries to think and act for his friend in his time of need. The two *Kammerfrauen* are more stereotyped, but they have together only about five lines of report, and these short speeches are directly to the point, in answer to questions. In fact, the author has covered his use of many persons to report with a fair degree of probability—i.e., of harmony of the character with the part given it to play.

Thus, if there is any relation at all between the character and the "report" of which it is the bearer, one finds at first usually an external harmony, with occasionally an inner psychological necessity for the report. But the tendency toward psychological motivation gradually asserts itself.

What determines the choice of the person to make the report?

In many of the Alexandrine plays of this period there is apparently no reason whatever why one person rather than any other one should have been selected to report.<sup>2</sup> However, in many cases there is an

<sup>1</sup> For a good characterization compare Minor's *Christian Felix Weisse*, Innsbruck, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> For example, in *Vitichab und Dankwart*, Gundomad, athane, never enters except as a bearer of news. What reason is there why just he should have been chosen to report, rather than some person of more importance in the action? He is merely a type, representing any thane.

external motivation of the choice. In Gottsched's *Agis*<sup>1</sup> we have an example. The persons who report are, in all cases but one, persons of importance in the action, though not necessarily those of the highest social rank. These "active" characters come together before our eyes, one or the other reports occurrences of which he has been an eye-witness, or a chief actor, the group of persons present then consult upon the situation, make plans, and separate to put them into action. Later, in an assembly of like character, we perhaps hear the outcome of this very action, planned before our eyes. Thus the action occurs almost entirely elsewhere, but is reported to us by those chiefly involved. In the one instance, V, ix, where a servant reports, he is the only person available; for since the enemy has been victorious the leaders of the patriot party are all either dead, imprisoned, or scattered, and the servant here might say, like the servants of Job: "And I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

Elias Schlegel's characters report, as a rule, what they have themselves experienced, that is, the active characters do the reporting. Even when unimportant characters are made to report they are usually well chosen. Thus in the tragedy *Orest*,<sup>2</sup> the priests, who elsewhere have no part in the action, report to the high priest the theft of the statue of Minerva and the ensuing struggle at the seashore. As priests they had been close by at the pretended cleansing of the statue after its pollution by the presence of the mad Orestes in the temple: thus they had been able to see for themselves all that happened, and we get the news on good authority. When hostilities began, after the seizure of the image, the priests, not being warriors by profession, ran away and told their master the high priest. So we have their report, somewhat breathless and excited. Nevertheless their connection with the report is largely external, they execute their office, and report to their superior what happens on that occasion, nothing more. But the manner of the report, the excitement, the haste, are the beginnings of psychological treatment of reports.

Gellert likewise chooses characters to report who have themselves been chief actors. In the *Betschwester* (1745) Simon, the prospective

<sup>1</sup> Printed 1745 in the *Schaubühne*, VI (*Die Deutsche Schaubühne, nach den Regeln und Exempeln der Alten*, Leipzig, 1740-45, 6 vols.).

<sup>2</sup> *Orest und Pylades* (final form, 1745).

bridegroom, and his representative (*Brautwerber*), Ferdinand, call upon the very pious but equally stingy mother of the young lady to arrange the marriage-settlement, and in honor of the occasion coffee is served, a most unusual extravagance. Unable to contain his amusement at the ridiculous manners of his future mother-in-law the unfortunate Simon bursts out laughing and his cup of coffee slips to the floor. The result is a tirade from the pious lady, all negotiations are declared ended, and the gentlemen retire in disgrace. The two young men relate the experience to Lorchen, the young lady who is "managing" the action, after the fashion in the comedies of this period for some one person, usually a servant or confidant, to direct the activities of the other characters.

Weisse in most of his tragedies and comedies and Lessing in all of his early dramas, and even in *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755), base their selection upon external connection with the matter of the report. Mellefont reports his own experience in following the unknown person, who wished to see him on important business. Norton is sent as a servant to find his master, and reports his experience. Betty's report about the assistance of the Marwood woman in preparing the "medicine" depends upon her position as servant. As a further illustration: Gebler in his *Klementine* (1771) uses in all some twenty reports. These occur quite uniformly in the discharge of regular duties. The house-servants report according to their position, the physician, upon the poison discovered, the police commissioner's clerk, upon the result of the investigation of the premises and the examination of persons suspected of poisoning the Baron.

Thus, in this period, the choice of the character to make the narrative report usually depends upon purely external motivation. From the plays already cited we can draw conclusions as to the types of characters who report. In Gottsched's *Agis* with one exception all are important characters from the standpoint of the action. In other plays cited we have messenger-rôles: Gundomad, in Ephr. Krüger's *Vitichab*, who appears only three times and always to make a report; and the tribune in Brawe's *Brutus* with his long report and the choral responses from Servilius. In Gebler's *Klementine* we have taking part in the reports many characters of all ranks, and of all grades of importance in the action.

But until the influence of *Miss Sara* began to make itself felt, we have in the *tragedies* usually reports by persons of rank who have themselves taken part in or been eye-witnesses to the action reported. The exceptions are usually of the dignified and strongly epic messenger variety. In the *comedies* prior to *Minna von Barnhelm* (1767) and later the servants do most of the reporting. The explanation is that in the tragedies previous to *Miss Sara*, it was the people of rank and importance who were made the heroes of tragedy,<sup>1</sup> it was considered honorable and dignified to take part in the action of a noble tragedy, hence active parts were assigned to the important characters; and in the times when there was little action upon the stage the result was that these characters were forced to report action.

In comedy the situation was different. For the fundamental idea in comedy prior to *Minna von Barnhelm* was to make a vicious action (*lasterhafte Handlung*) appear ridiculous. Even citizens of the middle class (*Bürgerleute*) were too respectable to be laughed at, or to be represented as vicious, so that often the entire action rests in the hands of servants and confidants.

Before discussing the use of confidants in comedy, a word may be said about their appearance in tragedy. They are used frequently in the tragedies of this period, and sometimes to carry the burden of the action. But confidants are of two kinds, according to the use they are put to: they may be used to talk to: "ein Vertrauter spitzt die Ohren, damit das Publikum höre," as Minor says of them; or they may themselves really carry the action. Both kinds of *Vertraute* are found in tragedy and comedy of this period; but the first kind is more common in tragedy, the latter kind in comedy.

The undisguised use of confidants is bad, but there are degrees of badness. To illustrate in the tragedy: In Gottsched's *Cato* the confidants simply do messenger service in most cases; they report

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gottsched, *Crit. Dichtkunst* (2. Aufl., Leipzig, 1737), II, ii, par. 19, p. 22: ". . . Das macht, dass dort (tragedy) fast lauter vornehme Leute; hier aber Bürger und geringe Personen, Knechte und Mägde vorkommen: dort die heftigsten Gemüthsbewegungen herrschen, die sich durch einen pathetischen Ausdruck zu verstehen geben; hier aber nur lauter lächerliche und lustige Sachen vorkommen, wovon man in der gemeinen Sprache zu reden gewohnt ist." These ideas, together with many others expressed in the *Dichtkunst* are exactly like those of Corneille. Cf. "Discours du poëme dramatique," *Œuvres* (ed. Marty-Laveaux, 1862), I, 23 ff.

to their masters or friends, as in duty bound to do, what they have seen or heard affecting their masters' cause.<sup>1</sup>

Their relation to the report is purely external, mechanical. There is no deeper connection between the report and the bearer of the report. This external mechanical nature is characteristic of the whole play. There is little action. What action there is, is there merely to form a background for the expression of sentiment, to create situations which permit the characters to portray their emotions. These outpourings of sentiment even are stilted, wordy, formal, that is, of the same "external" nature. There is no deep inner motivation of emotion, because action is lacking.

Essentially different is Brawe's use of a confidant in the report<sup>2</sup> where Brutus, the depth of whose character we have already come to know somewhat from the play, warned by a letter of the treachery of the young man whom he loves as a son, horrified and disgusted at the suspicion directed against him, cries out as it were in his mental struggle, when his whole noble nature rebels against base suspicions of so close a friend. And so we have in seven lines to Messala, his confidential friend, a really effective dramatic monologue, a mental process under the stress of a crucial moment, saved to *Wahrscheinlichkeit* by the use of a confidant. In this case the report is motivated from within, is psychologically justified. We learn from Brutus' horrified exclamations, really more to himself than to Messala, the nature of the contents of the letter.

As for the use of bold servants<sup>3</sup> and intimate friends in reports as well as to carry the action, this is so common as hardly to deserve illustration. The early plays of Lessing are of this type. In *Damon* (1747), *Der Freygeist* (1749), *Die alte Jungfer* (1749), the servants are active and do much of the reporting. Remember Just, even, and Franziska, in *Minna von Barnhelm*. However, there is little report except in *Der junge Gelehrte* (1748), until we come to *Miss*

<sup>1</sup> They are not servants in a base sense, but men of rank: Cato's son, and Caesar's general.

<sup>2</sup> *Brutus*, III, iv.

<sup>3</sup> Only the slightest acquaintance with early eighteenth-century German dramas and their French antecedents is necessary to enable the reader to recognize the type of shrewd, resourceful, usually vicious, often witty servant, upon whom the master relies as well for the plan as for the execution of action. Doubtless the most attractive character of this obtrusive and generally unpleasant type is Lessing's Franziska.



*Sara Sampson*. In any one of Weisse's earlier comedies the confidential servants have reports and usually direct the action: In *Die Matrone von Ephesus* (1744) Dorias, in the *Poeten* (1751) Henriette and Johann. Here the bold, resourceful servant-maid and the obedient daughter are fused into one personality, Henriette. Minor has made a study of Felix Weisse's comedies, discussing among other things the types, as well as the stereotyped characters and motives used by him in his comedies.<sup>1</sup> With this study as a point of departure, I have compared Weisse's use of stereotyped characters and motives, and his technique of reports in his comedies.

Weisse's activity as a comedy writer extends from 1744-69. He was conservative in his literary views, but, as editor of the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und freien Künste* (after 1759) and as correspondent of Lessing, Nicolai, Winckelmann, Hagedorn, Gerstenberg, and others he was well informed of movements taking place in German literature. In Leipzig he was Lessing's friend, but the latter soon outgrew him. Yet Weisse always looked to Lessing as a leader. His revisions show that he worked hard to perfect his powers, but that he lacked the genius as well as the radical courage to follow Lessing except afar off. Thus his dramas show fairly the average for his period, registering innovations only when they had become safe. For this reason I have chosen them by way of illustration, and shall use them from time to time for that purpose. Moreover, the period of his activity as a dramatic writer is a long one, including most of the time from the appearance of the *Schaubühne*<sup>2</sup> until Lessing's death.<sup>3</sup>

For this examination I have selected four of the types pointed out by Minor: (a) the bold, active servant; (b) the letter or similar means of bringing about the *dénouement*; (c) type of the stingy, selfish, or quarrelsome parents, opposed to the marriage and the happiness of the daughter; (d) the virtuous, obedient daughter. With reference to these types, especially, we find a first period of strict adherence to them: *Die Matrone* (I;<sup>4</sup> 1744), *Die Poeten nach der Mode* (III; 1751), *Die Haushälterin* (V; 1760), *Der Misztrauische*

<sup>1</sup> Minor, *Weisse*, chap. iii, "Weisse als Lustspiieldichter."

<sup>2</sup> First ed., Leipzig, 1740-45, 6 vols.

<sup>3</sup> 1781.

<sup>4</sup> I, III, V, indicate here the number of acts in the play.

gegen sich selbst (III; 1761). Then after three years (1764) comes a comedy of one act, *Der Naturaliensammler*, which shows marked differences in detail, though still retaining the old types; e.g., there is only one servant to act, and the daughter, while absolutely incapable of deceit, is herself resourceful and determined enough to carry the action to a successful termination. The next year (1765) appeared the *Amalia* (V), showing unmistakably the influence of *Miss Sara Sampson*. Here the problem of the play is different, there are new types of servants, who have interests of their own for which they work. English names are used, etc. After this daring departure, Weisse returns, in the *Projektmacher* (V; 1766), to a modification of his former types; and from this time on there is a gradual change to new types—always types, of course—in *Freundschaft auf der Probe* (V; 1767), *List über List* (V; 1767), *Weibergeklatsche* (I; 1767), *Grossmuth für Grossmuth* (I; 1767), *Walder* (I; 1769).

Examination showed that in that first period of adherence to old types, under the influence of the French, of Gottsched, and of Schlegel, Weisse made the most use of active confidants to report, as well as in other ways. But in the one-act comedy *Naturaliensammler*, showing a change in types, there is no report by anybody, and in *Amalia*, which reflects the influence of the English and of Lessing, likewise. With Weisse's return to his heathen gods, the old types, in the *Projektmacher*, comes a return to the report by the bold servant, in one place eighteen lines. In *Freundschaft auf der Probe* there is probably only one character original with Weisse<sup>1</sup> and that is the character of Woodbe, the very bold, trusted servant who carries the intrigue and has one long report about forty lines in all. In the next comedy, *List über List*, the confidant reappears, who however has nothing to report. And in the following comedies there is nothing at all to note.

Thus there is considerable variation on this point with Weisse, and on the whole progress is evident toward discarding the use of servants and intimate friends to make reports, parallel with like changes in the employment of other types. This change is characteristic of this period, although not fully carried through at the time of Lessing's death.

<sup>1</sup> See Minor, *Weisse*, chap. iii, par. 12.

### 3. *The Introduction and Conduct of Reports*

In examining the technique of introducing and conducting individual reports, let us consider first different kinds of introduction in general. Sometimes, indeed, like many another misfortune, the reports come unexpectedly and quite without introduction.<sup>1</sup>

If introduction there is, one form often made use of occurs at the opening of a new scene<sup>2</sup> and is accompanied by emotion. The new arrival rushes in, strongly excited, so that the first words are of the nature of an exclamation. Then follows, perhaps, a short direct question from someone present; the report is now begun with much excitement still existing; after two or three lines, a second question, or remark, or exclamation of the hearers interrupts, and by this time the bearer of the "report" has sufficiently collected himself to pronounce thirty lines or more of narrative without interruption.<sup>3</sup> In Krüger's *Vitichab und Dankwart* (1746; II, i), Fredegunde comes upon Vitichab, whom she has been seeking. She is in great fear for his life, for she has overheard the princes making plans to kill him, and he is her promised husband. Her first warning is a cry, but after three and one-half lines of soothing words from him, she is able to acquaint him with details of the plot to the extent of thirty lines.

Sometimes the entrance is abrupt, with a short prelude by way of introduction to the report. In the same tragedy by Krüger (III, ii), Willibald, the faithful oldthane of Fredegunde's father, Siegmars, has received a commission from his master to take her away secretly and devote her to the service of the goddess Hertha. Willibald comes upon Fredegunde unexpectedly, interrupting her complaint at the bitterness of fate. Without greetings on either side, he excuses in four lines the unpleasant news he brings, and then announces to her his mission and her fate: "Vernimm dein hart Geschick! Dein Vater . . . ," and the message follows.

At a time when the action was habitually elsewhere than on the stage, it is conceivable that a report might be of such consequence

<sup>1</sup> Witness Ephr. Krüger's *Mahomed IV* (1751).

<sup>2</sup> Naturally, since the entrance or exit of a person was the basis of division into scenes.

<sup>3</sup> Frequently such long reports are interrupted by the hearers or by the speaker himself. The technique of interruptions will be considered later.

to the author that he would take especial pains to have it well presented. Of very significant reports even the introduction itself might be much expanded. Such an important announcement occurs in Krüger's *Vitichab*, II, v. The author has prepared for it by the false report,<sup>1</sup> in the previous scene, of Siegmar, that the battle against the Romans has been lost. Siegmar's news is followed by a state of high excitement in the German camp. Now Gundomad is seen returning from the battle: "Ein neuer Flüchtling kömmt?" "Ich seh aus seinem Blicke, Und dem betrübten Gang des Vaterlands Geschieke." This is the introduction of the oncoming messenger, before he arrives within our view, and is therefore still in the above scene. The new scene opens with his actual appearance. He hardly has time to begin: "Ach Fürstin!" when he is cut short by the queen with angry reproaches, that all have proved themselves so cowardly. During this harangue, he stands astonished. When he hears what Siegmar has just reported, his anger grows against him. In the exchange of words which follows he reports a victory with one word only, although his whole speech bears that implication. Finally he begins to report, first five lines, then one and one-half lines, each time interrupted by an outbreak of joy from Adelheid, the old queen, first one line, then seven lines. This latter interruption ends with the direct demand for a full report: "Warum säumest du, mir selbst den Sieg zu melden?" The real report then follows in twenty-three lines. As Gundomad comes in his narrative to the supposed death of Vitichab, he hesitates, until the courageous words of the queen-mother (two lines) require him to tell all. Then follows (thirteen lines) the report of Vitichab's death and how his body was rescued. Here the epic or narrative element is strong but well enough disguised to be not very noticeable even to the reader. The strong excitement, the mutual reproaches, and the many interruptions tend to break the monotony and destroy the narrative effect.

In plays where there is apparent effort at conversational style various schemes are employed to avoid formality in the introduction of reports. One example will suffice. In Frau Gottsched's *Testament* (1743; III, iv), Frau Tiefenborn, the aunt, comes in with an exclamation of displeasure and drops into a chair; her two

<sup>1</sup> I.e., reported action which has in reality not taken place. Cf. *infra*, under "False Reports."

nieces start up with questions which are answered first by another expression of disgust, before the real cause is given: "Alles was mir verdrieszlich ist, wird mir heute auf einmal vorgebracht. Da kömmt der Wagenmeister und hat die Frechheit, . . . " and the report follows. The report is continued in the same fashion, the situation being developed by conversation of a most natural kind.

Another detail should be mentioned here. Especially in the years from 1730 to 1755, or thereabouts, stage directions printed separately as such were almost entirely lacking. Much that was later, and is now, printed as stage directions was at that time spoken somehow by the actors. Even the commonplace "Enter X" was then expressed by some character of the action, thus: "Ah! here comes X, he is just the one who can tell us what we want to know!" In Gottsched's *Agis*, the bearer of news is greeted thus:<sup>1</sup> "Mich dünkt ich höre schon Lysanders Stimm erschallen: Er kömmt und bringt vielleicht erwünschte Nachricht mit"; or,<sup>2</sup> "Hier kömmt Agesilas; Der weis, was vorgegangen"; or,<sup>3</sup> "Wie froh bin ich, von dir die Nachricht zu empfangen! Mein Bruder, lehre mich wie alles zugegangen" —a request which the brother fulfils in a report of sixty-two lines. This greeting serves the double purpose of a formal introduction of the new arrival to the audience, and of necessary stage directions.

This older form was intended primarily for the listener, who had not seen a text of the play. To judge from the printed stage directions, many modern plays presume that the spectator has studied the printed play before witnessing the production on the stage. In this wise are communicated details of the presentation of such a nature or in such numbers as would escape the mere spectator, even though carefully observant, who had not been previously coached as to what to expect.

The tendency to omit the explanatory remarks by the characters and to substitute stage directions becomes noticeable even in this period.<sup>4</sup> Directions for the movements of the actors, for instance, formerly verbal and expressed in the speech of a character, are later printed quite generally apart from the dialogue. The old method was taken over bodily from the French at the beginning, and was

<sup>1</sup> V, x<sup>2</sup> III, i.<sup>3</sup> II, i.<sup>4</sup> Cf. Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*.

retained apparently because of self-satisfied dilettantism, which had not yet reached the point of serious study of technique; that came with Lessing.<sup>1</sup>

A method of procedure in formal reports not often found in this period is illustrated by the following examples, taken from the plays of Elias Schlegel and of Brawe, two men whose early death cut short lives of great promise for dramatic literature in Germany; in fact, almost the only men in this field who developed ideas of their own in advance of Lessing.

In the first case, the scene opens after at least the beginnings of the report have been made, thus shortening the narrative by eliminating all introduction and mere formality, and proceeding at once to the subject of the report. In Schlegel's *Orest und Pylades* (II, v), a report of nineteen lines occurs. Orestes has, in his madness, attacked an unoffending shepherd youth, and now the father comes to the king to make complaint. In this scene little more than the omission of the introduction is gained. All details are recited, although part of this same matter has already been given in two separate reports. The scene opens with Thoas' question: "Wer durfte dieses wagen?" referring to the attack upon the innocent youth and showing that the complaint had already been made. Very similar is the technique in Schlegel's *Canut* (1746; III, i, or IV, i). The person receiving the report opens the scene with an excited demand betraying what and how much has already been communicated and at once requiring further report.

Somewhat different is Brawe's technique under similar circumstances. In the scene referred to above,<sup>2</sup> the communication has been made to Brutus in his tent in the form of a letter, read before the scene opens, and warning Brutus of Marcius' treachery. In the succeeding conflict of emotions, Brutus discusses the letter half to himself, half to his confidant, Messala. Note the form of Brutus'

<sup>1</sup> This is borne out by the fact that persons of every rank and profession believed themselves capable of writing dramas. To be sure, it was considered helpful to have the criticism of an actor friend, who could even at times introduce the author to stage life. It was well if the author had a skilful friend who could make useful suggestions as to form or meter, a service often rendered to Weisse by Ramler and others. And of the writers of dramas many followed other professions, and produced dramas "by the way." Even Felix Weisse was a government official (*Kreissteuereinnnehmer*) in Leipzig from 1761 on, and wrote his plays in his spare time (Minor, *Weisse*, 42 f.).

<sup>2</sup> *Brutus*, III, iv. See p. 15.

speech: first an exclamation, then his answer to the suggested suspicion; then the content of the letter in questions, answered each time negatively by Brutus to himself: "Messala! nein, man will uns hintergehen! Mein Freund, mein Marcius, Der sollte treulos sein? Nein! Verborgener Neid Schrieb den feindsel'gen Brief. . . ." Here absolutely all unnecessary formality has been excluded, and far from being a mere report for its own sake, it presents a lively inner conflict, in a play even of that early date (1757). To be sure, the importance of this report for the audience is the knowledge gained that Brutus has been informed of the conspiracy. For the plot itself we already know. Nevertheless, here is greater brevity and greater forcefulness, based upon inner motivation, than elsewhere outside of Lessing, up to this time.

The use made of letters in the plays of this period cannot be discussed here except in so far as they report a part of the "action" in the strict sense of the word, as in the above illustration. Far more commonly is the *dénouement* dependent upon a letter which arrives unexpectedly, enlightening the characters upon events perhaps long past. Let one illustration serve for all, before passing. In Gebler's *Adelheid von Siegmar* (1774) note the mechanism to bring the climax and the end. In IV, vi, Adelheid receives a letter which discloses to her events long past, and causes her to attempt to leave her husband, horrified at the discovery that he is the murderer of the man to whom she had given her love. The false friend had hired assassins to kill the happy lover, and the grieving bride had married the friend. The leader of the assassins, mistreated, determines to have his revenge, and finally plays this letter into the hands of Adelheid. The end is brought about by the old father of the bandit, now a hermit, who has learned the identity of the sender of the letter, and comes to prevent further calamity by explaining everything. Thereupon Siegmar, the husband, is so overwhelmed by a sense that his sins have found him out, that he takes his own life, and the tragedy—or rather, the bloody scene—is finished.

These mechanical means—a letter, or a person returning with knowledge—were common in this period. Consider, too, the use made of the letter by Lessing. Even as late as the *Minna* a letter from the king plays a part, though by no means an important one.

Yet the device is retained, and at the last the solution is brought directly by the arrival of the Count of Bruchsal, the uncle, who now makes his first appearance.

Upon examination of the *epic nature* of reports of this period, several clearly defined types of treatment are noticeable. First, there are those frankly narrative in nature. Apparently the author is entirely innocent of any suspicion that narrative is not drama. He introduces many details not essential, but intended to make the picture more real, more vivid.

Another type of treatment, while none the less baldly using the narrative as a legitimate means of presenting action to the audience, abandons the simple directness of the first type, and endeavors to make the narrative account attractive, that is, forceful, effective, in itself. Thus, the report is expanded and given a dramatic form within itself. Sometimes the report is divided among several persons, the form balanced, each report supplementing the others. Or the report is repeated for emphasis or suspense. Excitement is introduced, either very strong at first and becoming more calm with expression, or growing with the report to a climax. Such technique is now and then very elaborate. In reports of the second type, questions, usually direct, play an important part. By this means excitement is raised, by adding new fuel to the flame; or time is given the bearer of the report to collect himself, and to proceed more calmly.

Thirdly, there is an evident conscious effort, while retaining the narrative as an indispensable means of presenting action, to conceal as far as possible the means used; to cover up the narrative in various ways. The report is brought in quite by the way, while the main interest of the speaker seems to be upon something else; or interruptions, more or less well founded, break a large report into parts and relieve the monotony of a long, connected account. This ruse appears most threadbare, or formally successful, according to the author's skill. Or further, an attempt is made at imitation of conversational style, often with considerable success; this, of course, is more commonly found in comedies.

Between these three classes of narration, and the following group, there is an essential difference. The preceding types of treatment



imply in common a recognition of the narrative as either a legitimate means of presenting the entire action, or any of its parts; or as being indispensable, even if undesirable and to be concealed and avoided as far as possible. But here and there a technique is found, in outward form similar to the third group above, but with the great step in advance that the whole report as well as the various speeches are much more truly motivated psychologically. In outward form, then, reports of this kind do not distinguish themselves strikingly from others formally skilful; they may be "by the way," conversational, excited, successfully concealed. But here discrimination not merely formal has been exercised in determining what shall be reported. Under certain circumstances there can be no objection to narration even in drama. Many actions can be told conveniently and to the point, saving time and change of scene. This subject will be discussed below.<sup>1</sup> It is enough to say here that in this class of reports essential actions are seen on the stage, unessentials are reported, and that psychological treatment appears also in the technique of the individual report. By far the best examples of this group are the reports of Lessing.

As an excellent illustration of the first type above indicated, Bodmer's *Karl von Burgund* is almost unique among those plays examined. Bodmer's plays were not written for the stage, and so far as I know, they were never presented. *Karl* is interesting because it so clearly shows the model used<sup>2</sup> and so well illustrates the dramaturgical theories of the author. Bodmer wrote national dramas; he knew Shakespeare's historical dramas. But his object was to teach and to moralize. Shakespeare was too boisterous for his taste.<sup>3</sup> He thought it ridiculous to present battle-scenes upon the stage. For him the characters were most important, with their sentiments and philosophy, and the action was subordinate.

In *Karl von Burgund* he adhered closely to the Greek model. Similarities are: little action upon the stage; account of the battle by a messenger; return of the chief personage, who has lost the battle. In Aeschylus there is the Chorus, in *Karl* the three old

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, under "Substance of Reports."

<sup>2</sup> Aeschylus, *Persians*; cf. Seuffert, *D. Lit.-Denkmale des 18. Jh.*, IX, Intro.

<sup>3</sup> Im 2. *kritischen Briefe*, 1746.

men; in the *Persians* the mother of the king receives him returning; in *Karl* the daughter, Maria, greets her father. There are other similarities. But note especially the technique of the report. Maria is at first not present when the messenger, Chaligny, arrives. He is received by the Chorus, and begins his sad report of the battle with the Swiss, which is punctuated throughout by exclamations of dignified sorrow over the terrible loss inflicted upon the Burgundians. The speeches of the messenger (two to four lines) are weighed off against the words of the three old men in turn, equal in gravity and dignity and length. This is scene i of Act II. The report runs through eight pages, two scenes, all but one page of the entire act. In the second scene, Maria arrives, called from her devotions by the cries and lamentations of the people, as she explains, over the sad news. In an address of fifteen lines, she describes her devotions, her fear and trembling at the warning sounds of weeping, and finally bids the messenger speak, nor conceal aught; he obeys literally in a report of six pages. Of two of his speeches each is over one and one half pages in length, uninterrupted. The better to arouse his hearers to the full extent of the misfortune, the silver and gold vessels and other valuables lost in the campaign are carefully described—a finder might from the description return the lost articles to the owner. There is an attempt at imitation of the simplicity and dignity of Aeschylus.<sup>1</sup> At the last, Maria, good housewife that she is, reminds herself that Chaligny must be tired and hungry and invites him to go and refresh himself. This enables the author to remove Chaligny peacefully from the stage. Maria then feels justified in inviting our attention to a minute examination of the state of her feelings.

Here the author has deliberately chosen a bald descriptive narrative in the place of action. This play stands alone, so far as this examination has gone, in substituting one unadorned connected account for a complicated action.

There are many examples of plays where practically all the action is narrated, but piecemeal, in several reports. This treatment is well illustrated in Gotthed's *Agis*, already referred to. The report is formally introduced as information desired and needed by certain *dramatis personae* in deciding a course of action. A full report is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Seuffert, *D. Lit.-Denkmale des 18. Jh.*, IX, Intro.

asked for and received, not in short statements, nor in answers to questions, but in long, connected paragraphs with, perhaps, questions between the paragraphs. Such a paragraph of thirty lines is not uncommon.

Usually some sort of elaboration of the report is used for greater dramatic effect, though narration is still deliberately chosen as the means of presentation. The elaboration may be merely formal. The style of long narratives is often elevated. The author embraces the opportunity to make a small finished work—the words are well chosen and phrases well turned. The finished product is polished and set up to be admired. Revisions of Weisse's plays made several years after the original publication show changes mainly of a formal nature. Phrases have been filed into better form. But the technique remains fundamentally the same.

In comedy, expansion of reports into a *laughable situation* is common. The idea of comedy was at that time to present a succession of situations, each one of which, independently of the others, was ludicrous. Thus in Gellert's *Betschwester*,<sup>1</sup> already cited, Simon's mishap with the coffee cup is developed until it can be told with the effectiveness of a good story. The report itself, in so far as it was necessary to the action, might have been told in a very few words.

In a similar way, in tragedy a report may be emphasized and used for all its immediate effect, without much regard to its relative importance in the fabric of the action. Thus in his *Richard III* Weisse's chief stock in trade is the murder of the Princes in the inner prison. He approaches this subject from every possible point of view, and makes use of all phases of its consideration. First we see Richard and Tyrel rush off to the room of the Princes, with the express purpose of murdering them, and a few moments later, mother and sister of the children, standing upon the stage, hear the boys scream (though we do not). This might suffice. But later we see Richard, with bloody dagger and hands, retiring from the finished deed. The Queen and the Princess at the sight push past him through the unlocked door and we hear the agonized screams at the spectacle which meets their eyes. In his bloodthirsty manner

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 12 ff.

Richard reports the death scene. This at least should close the incident, one might think. But Tyrel,<sup>1</sup> as the second eye-witness, recalls the scene of the murder in a short monologue (eight lines), and when immediately afterward Stanly, on his way to the Queen with news of the victory of Richmond's army, surprises Tyrel in these thoughts, the latter detains him while he reports to him in eighty lines the details in full of the murder (trying at the same time to remove all blame from himself). To this long report I wish to call attention. But as though this death scene had not yet been sufficiently emphasized, the sister and especially the mother mourn loud and long whenever occasion does not prevent. Especially at the beginning of V, vii, the mother's words are truly affecting. Finally, in the last scene, Richmond must needs step to the door of the Princes' room, whence he, still upon the stage, can see the little bodies lying in their gore. With this the author closes his treatment of the incident.

Weisse's original was doubtless Shakespeare, whose *Richard III* he tried to improve upon, as he later confessedly attempted to do with his *Romeo und Juliet*.<sup>2</sup> In Shakespeare's drama the tragic end of the Princes is subordinated to the action of the play and is reported in about thirty-five lines in all. The complaint of the mother, too, is comparatively short and is supported by other moments. In Weisse's so-called drama, the affecting presentation of the murder scene is end and object of the whole play, calling forth the touching plaint of the Queen. Hence this long, expanded report, of eighty lines, of a part of the action already sufficiently described and emphasized. One situation, in itself effective or even powerful, is expanded and stressed beyond all proportion to the rest of the drama. And here is a striking instance where this is done by means of a long report.

The expanding of a little material into a long narrative may have its origin in a desire to make the situation impressive, to make an excited report, with the excitement as end and object, or to make the report a small work of art in itself, with rising interest and a climax perhaps. There may be other reasons. The author may attempt to conceal the report, and to that end may use technique of various kinds: extraneous material may be brought in to break the continuity of the narrative; the use of conversational style at

<sup>1</sup> V, v.

<sup>2</sup> *Beytrag z. d. Theater*, Theil V, Vorrede.

first meant great expansion of the report. For at first all the details were introduced in any case, and were simply surrounded by conversation, by the talkativeness of the reporting character, or otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

The result of the expanding of reports is usually either to destroy the relative proportion of the situations to the action, or in case the author aims at concealment of the narrative, the effect depends entirely upon his skill, and is sometimes extremely circumstantial and plodding, sometimes suggestive and spirited.

The *elaboration* of individual reports into a more or less *dramatic form* is interesting and pronounced enough to note. Sometimes within the limits of such a report can be distinguished an introduction, a rising interest, considerable suspense, and a miniature climax. Or the gradation is reversed, with the most tense excitement at the beginning, and gradually growing less. Much more commonly found is the latter technique, so much so that it hardly requires illustration. Any example will do: as in Brawe's *Brutus*, the tribune rushes in with confusion and shouting to warn the old man, Servilius: "Entflieh! Entflieh!" The use of exclamation, short sentence, dash, repetition of word or phrase, indicates extreme confusion and excitement, which soon moderate as the tribune settles to the author's business of reporting the battle. The construction of this excitement is mechanical, formal. On the other hand, while Lessing uses the same technique exactly in his *Emilia Galotti*, yet, because he makes us feel that his characters are human beings and not types, we find no objection to his application of the identical device: (II, v) "Emilia (stürzt in einer ängstlichen Verwirrung herein): 'Wohl mir! Wohl mir! Nun bin ich in Sicherheit. Oder ist er mir gar gefolgt? . . .'" Here, as there, is excitement to the point of confusion. In both cases the first word is an exclamation; here the one thought "saved!" there the one thought "flee, save yourself." In neither case is at first the thought of a report in the mind of the person entering. In both plays, following the excited entrance of the bearer of the report, come questions leading to the narrative, which in each instance is very long.<sup>2</sup> In the one case, questions and

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Frau Gottsched's *Testament*.

<sup>2</sup> In *Emilia* about thirty lines, twenty-five without interruption from the listener.

report are stiff and undisguisedly narrative in character; the conduct of the whole situation with Lessing is psychologically well founded, and the effect is dramatic.

So much for the type of gradation where the greatest excitement comes at the beginning of the situation.

Consider now Weisse's *Befreyung von Theben*.<sup>1</sup> Most of the action is reported, but there is constantly an effort to conceal artificially the means used, by giving the narrative an artistically effective form. Thus in Act II, scene i, is the monologue of the mother of young Kallikrates, who meditates in her anxiety how at least to save her son's life from the dangers threatening his father, Charon. At the time the patriot leaders are assembled in Charon's house, to carry out that very night a long-planned attack to overthrow the tyrant of Thebes, Archias. The boy, Kallikrates, wished to join the conspirators, but was sternly commanded by his father to betake himself to his mother, that he was too young for such labors. Beside himself, the boy insulted the tyrant before his own house, an action which might be fatal to Charon and the plot. All of this the author wishes to communicate. He prepares for the report by the monologue of the mother. The boy enters, the mother attempts to persuade him for his father's sake to leave Thebes and go to Athens or some other safe place. This leads to an outbreak of discontent and rage on the boy's part, during which he complains bitterly of his father's treatment of him as if he were a child, and relates boastingly his adventure at the palace of the tyrant. Thus the report is carefully prepared for a whole scene in advance, for the mother's monologue is not to be explained otherwise.

Act III, scene iii of the same play furnishes a better illustration of a climactic scene, and at the same time is the sequel to the incident just cited. Phillidas, one of the patriots, has deceived the tyrant with his pretended friendship, and the latter is, upon this night, banqueting at Phillidas' palace with a company of his creatures. Here the patriots hope to surprise and overwhelm them in the midst of their drunken debauch, provided that the plan carries. But the insult of the boy without the palace is rumored about at the tables, and the merriment suddenly ceases. Phillidas succeeds in diverting

<sup>1</sup> 1764.

the minds of his guests, and the drinking goes on. Suddenly a soldier enters and reports to the tyrant that rumors are current in the city of soldiers being smuggled in at the gates, and of conspirators concealed at the house of Charon. Again there is a hush, and this time genuine alarm, with consequent danger for the plot. Phillidas cleverly suggests that enemies have started the rumors to disturb the feast. The drunken company agrees this time less readily, until Archias commands the arrest of Charon, and the searching of his house. Here, then, is the end. All will be discovered. Again Phillidas gains time, by offering to go himself to make the arrest. Thus he appears suddenly among the conspirators. His unexpected presence is enough to arouse intense agitation, a fit beginning for a significant report. Starting with this degree of excitement, each succeeding episode of the above report heightens the tenseness of the suspense. And as Phillidas suddenly concludes: "Nun sprich, was willst du thun?" one feels that while the words are not so confused or excited, the *situation* has step by step become desperate until there seems to be no way to turn with hope of anything else than death. Here the gradation of interest is secured by combining into one report a succession of incidents belonging to the action, each one of which renders the situation more desperate than its predecessor.

Lessing carefully leads up to a report in *Emilia Galotti*, Act III, scene i. Marinelli prefaces the report of his new plan for securing possession of Emilia by clever diplomacy until the beginning of his communication is emphasized by the sound of a shot from without. With Lessing little is said or done for effect only; the action is rapid, and, the suspense raised by this report, goes quickly over to the report by the assassin, Angelo, all of which belongs to the full account of the occurrence, and closes the incident of the attack for us.

Even Bodmer in his stiff, laborious way makes use of this technique in Act IV of his *Brutus*.<sup>1</sup>

Of the examples just cited, Weisse uses the reports to communicate the chief action of the play; Lessing subordinates all to the action,

<sup>1</sup> For Bodmer's dramas compare his *Neue theatralische Werke*, I. Band (Lindau im Bodensee, 1768); "Politische Schauspiele" (1768); "Der Vierte Heinrich, Kaiser, und Cato der Aeltere, oder der Aufstand der römischen Frauen. Zwey politische Dramata" (1768).

every important step of which he causes us to see. Lessing uses as careful, and a more successful, technique for the important parts of the action as his predecessors did for the emphatic incidents.

The use of excitement in reports has been discussed in part; the gradation of interest up to or down from a climax, and why and how this technique is employed. There remains to examine the more mechanical means used to secure the effect of excitement.

The mechanical means of lending excitement to a report are of various kinds and of various degrees of effectiveness. "Flieh, edler Greis! Schmach, Knechtschaft, Tod Umringen dich! Beflügelt eilen sie; Entflieh!"<sup>1</sup> In these first words of the tribune to Servilius, (a) the short sentence urges a single thought, "flee"; (b) the meter assists the thought (*Schmach, Knechtschaft, Tod*); (c) the use of exclamations and, in the printed text, of exclamation marks, and the repetition of the important word "Entflieh!" assist. The answer of Servilius interrupts, with exclamation and questions; now follows a report with several ideas in confusion; after a second interruption, half exclamation, half question, succeeds the narrative in more connected form, changing quickly to the historical present for vividness, using mostly short sentences; several times requiring a dash as the sign of a break in the thought, with here and there an exclamation. The means already enumerated are the ones chiefly used in the reports examined: short sentences, bearing one thought at a time, meter and choice of words, use of exclamations, repetition of important words for suspense, interruptions in the form of urgent questions or exclamations, confused expression of thought, use of dash, use of historical present.

The employment of such mechanical means increases the effectiveness over such a passage as: "Noch einmal, Herr, Entbrennt der Kampf, vor unsers Lagers Wall, . . ."<sup>2</sup> which introduces a call to arms, is intended therefore to be excited and exciting, is so in content, but to the ear is as melodious as a hymn.

The element of excitement is introduced into almost all reports of any length, from the stiff, formal plays of Gottsched and his followers to the revolutionizing plays of Lessing and those of his imitators. This is true in large part of comedy as well as of tragedy,

<sup>1</sup> Brawe, *Brutus*, IV, ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, ix.



from the *Testament*<sup>1</sup> of Frau Gottsched on. The difference is in the skilfulness, rather than in the technique applied. Instances of more successful application of this technique occur only here and there in this period. For instance, in Bodmer's *Pelopidas*, II, ii, it is reported that a messenger from the tyrant is at the door inquiring for Charon, the chief conspirator. There is a rapid succession of short sentences. II, vi should be exciting, but there is little internal evidence. The quotations are direct in all cases: "Und Phillidas fuhr fort: 'Hast du nichts gewisses gehört,'" etc.; but the sentences are rather long, with too many subordinate clauses to be effective. In Gebler's *Adelheid*, I, vi, the impetuous passion of Hedwig asserts itself and carries us easily through an uninterrupted speech of fifteen lines. There are no exclamations in her statement; her remarks are a rapid succession of crisp short sentences, each one well directed. No words are wasted. In later reports a different technique is used: in IV, vi, Dahlen trembles with uneasiness and dread when he knows that Adelheid has received a letter. "Ha! Meine Furcht trifft zu.—Es ist geschehen. Eine Todespost!—Ach; Christine! zittere sie mit mir." Now we hear a cry from the next room, and Adelheid has fainted. Then follows commotion, and Christine's excited report (after her return) about her mistress. There is much use of dash and exclamation mark. Other reports are similar: V, i, ". . . und der gnädige Herr, der bey meiner Erzählung blasz wie der Tod wurde! wütend nach Dahlen's Zimmer lief!" Here the sentences are not complete. Or, V, ii, "Ha, er entführt sie!—seine Zimmer leer; kein Geräthe, kein Bedienter; alles fort, in der Stille fort; hinter dem Garten der Wagen bestellt!—Umsonst! Ihr entrinnt nicht! . . ." etc.

To choose perhaps the best example of this technique of the whole period, compare Emilia's report of the meeting with the Prince in the church. Here again Lessing's technique excels, because it is based upon human nature. We hear and feel the human being, not the words alone. The mechanical technique is similar in many respects to that of the passage from *Brutus* referred to above.<sup>2</sup> Brevity of expression at first, secured by choice of a word implying much: "Wohl mir!"; the use of exclamations, the repetition of important

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1745; written in 1743.

<sup>2</sup> P. 21.

words: "Ist er . . . .," and the confusion in expression—all these means are found to be applied with the highest skill. But these externals, while none the less effective, are forgotten in our human interest in the individual, Emilia.

As to the nature of the excitement thus produced, notice that almost always, except in Lessing's later dramas, the excitement is synonymous with vivacity or activity, rather than the result of suspense. For instance, an eye-witness comes from the scene of action, and in his report the signs of physical excitement appear in his words—the excitement or incoherency of unusual activity, rather than the uncertainty of suspense or of mental disquietude.

Lessing begins here and advances. Emilia opens the scene in extreme physical agitation. She rushes in with wild looks and anxious confusion, accompanied by rapid movements, throws back her veil, and then casts herself into her mother's arms. This uneasiness communicates itself to her language. But back of this physical excitement, one feels here a high degree of mental disquietude, which arouses the eager desire in our minds to know the cause. This suspense is appreciably increased when the wished-for communication is postponed for nearly a page, until Emilia finds the necessary self-command in response to her mother's injunction: "Fasse dich!—Sammle deine Gedanken so viel dir möglich.—Sag' es mir mit eins, was dir geschehen!" Here the interest of the reader is psychologically, not merely mechanically, aroused and sustained, and the excited form of the dialogue has its origin, not in physical agitation alone, but to a great extent in the mental state of the heroine.

Brief mention of some details of the mechanical technique discussed above may be justified.

The *historical present* is used only here and there. Curiously enough, the examples noted are in plays of earlier date, e.g., Krüger's *Vitichab*, and Brawe's *Brutus*. Lessing in *Miss Sara*, *Minna*, and *Emilia* avoids the historical present even in long reports, where we might naturally expect to find it.

*Exclamations* are very common in reports throughout this period. But later the use made of them changes greatly. Occasionally, as in *Vitichab*, they are employed early in the period, to show real excitement, in the report as elsewhere throughout the drama. But often,

as in Gottsched's *Cato*, exclamations are very stilted. Otherwise, as in Bodmer's plays, they are merely direct address to the gods, or the like: "Groszer Gott!" or "O Vater Romulus!" Actor-playwrights, such as Brandes, made frequent use of exclamations, although in many cases they are only distinguishable from declarative sentences by the presence of an exclamation mark. Those used in Lessing's reports, in *Emilia*, for instance, are of the character of true exclamations, recognizable as such with or without distinguishing punctuation.

Infrequent, too, is the use of *rhetorical questions*, all examples noted being in the early period when any means to the end of formal perfection, however pedantic, was eagerly seized upon.

The evident development in the use of the *dash* is of interest. Gottsched uses none in the reports of *Cato*. Every sentence must be formally complete. Even among his immediate followers, however, the dash makes its appearance. Ephr. Krüger uses it frequently. In the camp of the enemy, Bodmer employs it often. But with few exceptions in these plays, the sentences, or at least the thoughts, are quite complete before the dash is introduced. That is, the break in the continuity of the thought cannot be said here to denote excitement or extreme agitation. Often the dash is quite meaningless, as used, not even indicating a break in the thought, and might as well be a comma or a period.<sup>1</sup> Compare on the other hand from Lessing's *Emilia*: "Ist er, meine Mutter? Ist er [mir gefolgt]? . . . Nein, dem Himmel sei Dank!" or "Eben hatt' ich mich—weiter von dem Altare, als ich sonst pflege. . . ." Here are the broken sentences of real emotion and excitement.

Only here and there occurs repetition of a word or expression, at first in a somewhat rhetorical fashion for emphasis, later in Lessing directly for emphasis and suspense. Thus *Vitichab*, III, iv: "Ich bins . . . nein! . . . Ich! Ich Verräther bins, der dir den Sieg entwandt! Ja, ich wich . . . Ich wich," and the report follows of his desertion (Siegmar's). Again, with less stiffness and more effectiveness, Brawe uses this technique in his *Brutus*, III, iv.<sup>2</sup> He opens and closes the report with a decided "Nein!" and gains force for the second negative by letting it answer the three rhetorical

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Brandes, *Gasthoff*.

<sup>2</sup> Cited above, p. 22.

questions just preceding, this being repetition of the rhetorical form if not of the words. In IV, ii the repetition "Flieh, edler Greis! . . . . Entflieh!" is emphatic. Compare here the uneasiness and suspense gained by repetition of words in Emilia's report of her encounter with the Prince in the church (II, vi).

For various reasons the author may prefer, instead of putting the whole into the mouth of one character upon one occasion, to let him *supplement* his own report on a different occasion, repeating part or all, and adding details; or one or more characters may be detailed to assist the first one, either reporting jointly with him, or complementing and supporting his report by theirs. Thus in Krüger's *Vitichab*,<sup>1</sup> Fredegunde has made a full report to Vitichab of the treacherous plans of the plotters. In the third and fourth scenes of the same act we hear from Vitichab and Gundomad not only the confirmation of her report, but the further detail of the execution of the traitors, closing the episode. It may just suit the author's purpose to show in this way that the same information is possessed by different persons. It may be his intention that each report shall correct something false about the preceding one, and shall add new information, more or less correct, as in *Vitichab*, III, iv, v,<sup>2</sup> IV, i, where the intention very clearly is to play upon the sensibilities by a succession of good and ill reports. Or the reports may supplement each other in such a way as to build up a complete situation in dramatic form,<sup>3</sup> with introduction, rising action, and climax.

In this last category belongs a situation in Bodmer's *Brutus*<sup>4</sup> built up out of three scenes, based upon reports by Caesar, Antony, Calpurnia, and the priest or augur. The question is: Shall Caesar go down to the Capitol on that day?

There is a general introduction in IV, i, to the whole situation. From the beginning the theme of the scene is the great event to happen upon that day, the crowning, and the actual and prospective circumstances. But the introduction of the subject of supernatural signs or omens is by a sudden and somewhat abrupt transition, separated from the foregoing by a dash. Antony has just finished a report about persons and events—facts, and thereupon predicts

<sup>1</sup> II, i; cf. above, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. above, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> IV, i, ii, iii.

a successful outcome of Caesar's plans. Caesar answers, with abrupt change of topic: "Ich danke dir, Consul.—Wenn ich viel auf Prognostika hielte, so könnte ich glauben dass mir Unglück bevorstünde.—" And then he tells of his dreams and of the mysterious voices calling him. He has this on his mind, and it troubles him. Hence the abruptness. But when Antony undertakes to talk of such things, Caesar cuts him short in the middle of a sentence: Antony speaks of "Krieg in den Wolken, Regen von Blut—" omens seen in the preceding night. Here Caesar interrupts with a jest; when the earth gets a king, even the heavens express their astonishment. Then Antony with a bit of flattery determines Caesar's resolve to make light outwardly of the whole matter. Caesar's pride is appealed to: Ant.: "Du bleibst dir allemal gleich, ohne Furcht vor allen Elementen, und viel mehr Furcht einzujagen gebohren."

Next comes Calpurnia with her anxiety because of dreams. Caesar, manlike, is inclined to jest at her misgivings. Yet it is not pure jest. He says himself: "Es ist nicht leerer Scherz." Since a certain runaway, when his life was spared after a prayer breathed in the moment of danger, he has lived "wie die Ceremonien der Religion es befehlen." It is clear then that Caesar is not unimpressed by the events of the night. He is jesting at his own misgivings as well as at those of his wife. And at his wife's request he calls the augur, again of course covering his action with a jest about being familiar with the priests' game, having himself often "inspired" the augurs by means of generous gifts.

The climax to the reports comes when the priest, his report of the auguries laughed at by Caesar, throws himself at the dictator's feet and implores him not to disregard the warning, recounting in a long speech<sup>1</sup> the various wonders reported. Caesar still scoffs at all warnings and entreaties, but at the first loophole which presents itself, he decides to remain at home. His wife begs him to stay as a proof of his love for her. Here is something that he can do. The godlike Caesar refuses to be moved by omens or warnings; but to please his wife, and incidentally to show his power, he can cause the Senate to await his pleasure even to crown him. Or he may have

<sup>1</sup> Two-thirds of a page.

been secretly relieved to find some excuse to avoid what he believed to be impending danger, an excuse which would save his pride. For the Caesar of the play does not free himself from the charge of being susceptible to supernatural omens. The reports are interspersed with much entreaty and argument; yet they form the groundwork of the retarding moment, and produce a somewhat labored suspense.

Supplementary reports may very effectively be used to conceal the narrative by not only parceling out the material to a number of individuals, but also by distributing the various contributions in wider intervals throughout a conversation. For example, in the younger Stephanie's *Deserteur*<sup>1</sup> the men in the guard-house discuss in an off-hand way the desertion of the hero, Holbeck, one offering this, another that, bit of information, coming back to the subject from time to time as occasion wills. Marder, the officer of the guard, knows most about the official prosecution of the case; the men have more to report about the details of his capture. Weisbard, on guard at the door, reports the execution of the punishment upon the runaway. Thus the report proceeds quite spontaneously and naturally.

Mention has already been made of reports where the author evidently attempts to *avoid* the effect of *unconcealed narrative*. Various means are used to cover the report. The news may be communicated indirectly, by the way merely. Or, in what is really a report, some other phase than the facts to be communicated may be emphasized in order to divert attention from the manner of communicating the news. Or the dialogue may take on a conversational character, at first very crude.

A few ponderous attempts at reports "by the way" are found in plays in the early part of this period. The method is to give the character a special message to deliver, and to let the remainder—the real report—seemingly come by chance. Thus in *Vitichab*, Fredegunde ostensibly comes to warn Adelheid to save Vitichab, whose life is threatened, but in the course of this communication her mind reverts to the scene of her father's duel to the death with Tiberius, and, overwhelmed with grief, she describes how her brother

<sup>1</sup> III, i; written in 1773, printed in 1775.

attacked the murderer of his father, and the outcome. This, the real narrative, occupies over thirty lines of report, and is easily recognized in its true character through the slight mask.

Again in the same play, for example: after the battle in which the Romans have been defeated, there is a generous strife between Vitichab and Rando, each assigning to the other the chief honors of the day. The report is inserted in the dialogue between the persons chiefly active in the occurrences. Vitichab thanks Rando for having saved his life and the victory, and offers him his own office of *Herzog* as his just due, thus indirectly reporting some details. The veiled report in Rando's answer is more direct: "Das Glück war uns geneigt, der Feind ergriff die Flucht, Und deine Sicherheit war unseres Sieges Frucht. Durch unserer Aerzte Fleisz erholtest du dich wieder . . .," etc. At the last of his indirect account, the ostensible theme is again emphasized, namely, the friendly strife: "Nun sprich; ob du mir noch dein Leben schuldig bist? Und ob der Deutschen Sieg durch mich erfochten ist?" thus completing the attempt of the author to cover up the narrative character of the report, by emphasizing some other phase of the conversation.

In Bodmer's plays the report often disappears under a deal of philosophizing, as in *Brutus*, III, iii.

The most successful method of veiling the narrative in reports is by the use of conversational style of dialogue. This was attempted very early in comedy. Frau Gottsched succeeds in her *Testament* (1743) in producing a conversational style which is so "natural" as to be unpleasant or even coarse; but she is so successful in making the reports a part of the conversation that they lose all narrative effect. Thus one<sup>1</sup> report is inserted in the middle of a four-page scene, is begun and carried on in an off-hand conversational style, and is given by three persons in the same manner in which any group would recall an incident which they had witnessed together, the remarks of each speaker supplementing those of the others. Each expresses only one idea in a speech, as is commonly the case in rapid conversation. In earlier dramas of this period, in reports as elsewhere, a single speech was a whole paragraph.

But even when elsewhere the conversation moves easily, the

<sup>1</sup> III, i.

technique may fail utterly in reports. In Ayrenhoff's *Postzug* (1769), the scene is very well planned for conversation in groups at two tables, and between groups. But II, i, where the report of the dinner party is made, the author in true Alexandrine style introduces the steward (*Verwalter*), who reports in conversation with Lisette as they lay the tables for the after-dinner coffee. As the two spread the table covers, the "conversation" moves along, with just enough questions from Lisette to keep the report in progress, such as "Wie so?" "Na, und wie bezeigt sich der Bräutigam dabey?" occurring between descriptions of two-seven lines from the *Verwalter*. This scene is important for the action, and had to be presented in some way by the author. So that we understand well enough what is meant when the steward says in leaving: "Nun weis Sie genug, Lisette, ich will wider hineingehen, sonst möchte mich die Herrschaft vermissen." This again is true Alexandrine motivation of the arrival and departure of characters on the stage.

In many comedies after *Minna von Barnhelm*, the conversation is much better, in reports as elsewhere, especially in the works of actor-playwrights like Brandes and Stephanie the younger.

Because of the serious nature of the subject, the dialogue of tragedy is more inclined to long speeches, comprehending more than one single thought. Yet the introduction through *Miss Sara Sampson* of the middle-class tragedy (*bürgerliches Trauerspiel*) meant progress in this direction because it introduced as material more of the everyday life, which can be discussed in conversational dialogue. In the report of Angelo to Marinelli in *Emilia* III, iv, we have completely the conversational style in reporting action.

MAR. Und wie lief es sonst ab?

ANG. Ich denke ja, recht gut.

MAR. Wie steht es mit dem Grafen?

ANG. Zu dienen! So, so!—Aber er musz Wind gehabt haben.

Denn er war nicht so ganz unbereitet. . . .

Briefly stated, there is sufficient evidence to show that, following early attempts resulting in a somewhat threadbare veiling of the narrative in reports, came a distinct advance with the use of the conversational style in reports; and that by the time of Lessing's death this technique was successfully used not only in comedy but



also in tragedy. This was one phase of the development of the idea of truthful imitation (*Nachahmung der Wahrscheinlichkeit*) so much discussed at that time and not settled at the present day.

The use of *questions* in the mechanism of reports is general throughout this period, but the technique changes essentially toward the last. By "question" is meant any sort of demand, not necessarily of the interrogative form. The question serves many purposes, thus: (a) to introduce reports, or (b) to develop the narrative even to the extent that the interrogator directs the whole report with his questions, or (c) to increase the excitement, or (d) to allow the bearer of the report time to collect himself. (e) "Questions" serve to break the monotony of long reports. Again, (f) questions often contain parts of the report in themselves, and require only to be confirmed by a word.

To recall the division of reports made above: of the reports evidently considered indispensable by the author instead of direct presentation, three groups were found: (a) broad, frankly epic narrative, (b) embellished narrative, (c) concealed narrative. In addition, it appears that Lessing especially no longer felt bound by pedantic rules for presenting certain action only through the medium of reports. He followed his own keen sense of what was of human interest and of logical importance in the dramatic action. This he presented on the stage, and such reports as occur are required by reason, not by rule.

Following these groups in the order named, it is noted that certain kinds of questions are more commonly found in certain ones of these groups. Thus the broad narrative reports of the early type of drama are quite generally introduced by a direct invitation to impart the desired information. Thus in Bodmer's *Pelopidas*, II, vi, Pelopidas demands (direct question) that Charon relate what befell him at the house of Phillidas. A report of a whole page follows, without an interruption. Often in those plays in which the central characters are personages of high rank, the "question" takes the form of a direct command from a superior to his subordinate.

A notable exception to the introduction of reports by a direct demand for information is the case of Mortimer in Weisse's *Edward*

III. Mortimer reports repeatedly, but in accordance with his rôle as the "manager" of the action, as the active character, he never waits to be asked, but uses his reports to drive other characters to action.<sup>1</sup>

In long reports with formal embellishment eager questions assist in increasing the excitement to a climax; or longer questions combined with remarks allow the bearer of the report time to collect himself for a calmer narrative.<sup>2</sup>

Among the first attempts to veil narrative may be reckoned the questions which themselves impart information. The listeners assist in the report as in Weisse's *Theben* (1764), V, vi. Later, as the dialogue approaches the conversational style and single speeches become shorter, the "question," often the direct question, is used to interrupt and break the monotony. A special use of the direct question is found, moreover, in Weisse's *Die Flucht* (1770), III, i, and in Gebler's *Klementine* (1771), IV, ix. In the *Flucht* Karl worms from his brother's trusted servant, Joseph, the details of the plan for Sophie's flight with Karl's brother. Karl's methods are those of a modern police inspector. First he threatens, then promises leniency.

KARL. . . . so werde ich und mein Vater euch in Schutz nehmen.—Was wiszt ihr also?

Jos. Je nun, der Major Worthall und meines Herrn Leutenant sind auf dem nächsten Dorfe.

KARL. Ah! Gewisz, das Fräulein zu entführen?—Aber wie wollen sie ihr beykommen?

Jos. Das weisz ich nicht.

KARL. Auch nicht die Zeit, wie, wo, wann?

Jos. Ich soll über Hals und Kopf dem Major einen Brief überbringen. . . .

KARL. Einen Brief? Einen Brief? Habt ihr ihn schon?

And under threats he finally gains possession of the letter, which he opens.

Similarly the broadly comic scene in *Klementine*. The police *Kommissar* is questioning Jakob, the respectful old house servant, concerning the identity of a gentlemen suspected of having sent

<sup>1</sup> III, vi; IV, v.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 23.

the Italian poisons of which the Baron, the head of the house, has just died.

KOMMISSAR. Ist es eben der Fremde, der vor etlichen Monaten hier war?

JAKOB. Ja, Gestrenger Herr; doch spricht er jetzt deutsch, und trägt sich weltlich.

KOMMISSAR. Mit dem Klementine sich damals oft allein unterredete? [Klementine was suspected of having administered the poison to the Baron.]

JAKOB. Ja, Eure Gestrengen, doch ich glaube, in allen Ehren. Er ist schon ein Mann bey Jahren.

KOMMISSAR. Darum fragt man euch nicht.

JAKOB. Nein, Eure Gestrengen.

KOMMISSAR. Schweigt einmal mit euren Gestrengen.

JAKOB. Wie soll ich Sie sonst nennen?

KOMMISSAR. Antwortet jetzt einen Augenblick gescheid. Verlangte der Fremde mit Klementine zu sprechen?

JAKOB. Er stieg im Wirtshause ab. Ich sas mit Dalheims Friedrichen vor der Thüre; wir tranken zusammen eine Flasche Wein, um uns von der Angst zu erholen. Der fremde Herr sieht mich; seine erste Frage war, wie es dem Baron, wie es Klementine gienge? Ich sagte: schlecht; der eine ist schon ganz todt, die andere halb, er erschrak. Ich muszte ihm die völlige Geschichte erzählen. Er beehrte mit Eurern — zu sprechen. Er wartet im Vorhause.

KOMMISSAR. Lasst ihn herein kommen (*Jakob geht zur Mittelthüre ab*)

This citation illustrates as well to what extent the length of a report was increased, in order to preserve the indirectness and circumstantiality characteristic of the old servant.

In the fourth class of reports of this period, as illustrated in Lessing, many such uses are made of questions as are described above.<sup>1</sup> But the technique is so refined that it loses all formality and is felt to belong naturally where it occurs. And the final more subtle step belongs again to Lessing.

The *interruptions* of reports deserve notice. In some early plays<sup>2</sup> reports, even long ones, are seldom interrupted. In Gottsched's *Cato* the reports coming all eventually from French models, interruptions are moderately frequent,<sup>3</sup> but not successful. In Ephr. Krüger's plays, however, there are many short interruptions in long

<sup>1</sup> *Emilia*, II, vi; III, i, ii, vi; IV, iii.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Pitschel's *Darius* (1752).

<sup>3</sup> Four times in a twenty-six line report.

reports. The long reports in Elias Schlegel's plays are often interrupted. And this is true of longer reports generally. Sometimes these interruptions are quite of the nature of chorus interruptions in Greek plays.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally in metrical plays the interruptions come at regular intervals,<sup>2</sup> and are themselves of regular measure, two lines or four lines.

Interruptions are sometimes drastic, as when in Melchior Grimm's *Banise* the report of the soldier angers the Emperor, who interrupts him in the middle of a sentence by hewing at him with his saber.

Later, in the real and near conversational style of report, the narrator may interrupt the active report by his own talkativeness, rambling from the theme and returning to it more than once in the course of one speech.<sup>3</sup> Or with a definite break in the connection, the narrator may turn from his own report to something else, as in Ayrenhoff's comedy, *Der Postzug*, I, xii. The affected and effeminate Graf v. Blumenkranz, who is incapable of any connected thought, or even of finishing properly one remark, interrupts his account of his terrible accident to recognize each member of the assembled company, or to call for a mirror and to arrange his powdered wig and face. Such interruptions are largely for the purpose of characterization. In Gebler's *Klementine*, Lenore interrupts the narrative of the dry old court clerk continually. In harmony with her more impetuous character, she anticipates his remarks repeatedly by divining what he is about to say, and thus she robs him of his well-prepared climaxes, much to his disgust.

GERICHTSSCHREIBER. . . . Von ohngefähr komme ich in die Küche und treffe Blanden an, der Papiere in das Feuer wirft. Ich ziehe sie schnell heraus; sie waren zum Glück nur hier und da versehrt. Es ist ein Testament, Bland erschrickt heftig.

LENORE. Ohne Zweifel das rechte Testament des Barons. Ja, Gewisz! darinn wird nichts von einer Heyrath mit Blanden zu finden seyn.

GERICHTSSCHREIBER. Geduld, Frau Lenore, das ist schon das zweyte mal, dasz Sie meine Erzählung unterbricht. . . . Also in meiner Erzählung fort zu fahren. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, pp. 5 ff.; as an illustration compare Gottsched's *Agis*. As a further illustration see Brawe's *Brutus*, IV, ii, where the old man, the recipient of the news, expresses from time to time surprise, confusion, or astonishment.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Weisse's *Theben*, III, iii: 2 + 2 + 8 + 8 + 8 + 16 lines.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Weisse, *Der Misztrauische gegen sich selbst*, II, iii.

In comedy the interruptions in the conversational style of reports occur early, in fact in Frau Gottsched's own plays. The skilful handling of such interruptions develops with the other technique of conversation. Some of the more crude beginnings have been mentioned.

Interruptions are by no means always indicated by the use of the dash, even where they cause a direct break in thought.

The motivation of such interruptions of reports is, at the beginning of the period, superficial or altogether lacking. Here and there they are better founded, e.g., in *Vitichab*, Fredegunde's most prominent characteristic throughout the play is anxiety for her loved ones, which prompts her numerous interruptions of reports. Lenore's premature remarks in *Klementine* have their origin in her natural impetuosity. In Bodmer's *Italus*, III, ii, iii, Suanhuita interrupts Alboin, whom she despises, out of anxiety, impatience, anger, grief. Cundilo she allows to speak for a long time uninterrupted, for he brings good news, he is a friend whom she respects. The interruptions which do occur here are expressions of relief, joy, rejoicing.

In Lessing's reports, interruptions are usually motivated by strong excitement.

Enough has been said above to make it evident that Lessing's use of reports has more foundation than that of his predecessors. Others followed formal pedantic rules as to what kinds of action could or could not be properly shown on the stage and, like Weisse when in *Theben* and in *Krispus* he changed the scene in the fifth act, they trembled at the least violation of precedent; whereas Lessing with perfect self-reliance admits action to the stage or chooses to report it, according to its relative importance in the dramatic structure of which it is a part.

The use of the report once determined upon, the problem arises of *motivating its appearance and conduct*. Here also the progress is considerable within the period under discussion. In the early technique, many reports simply happen. To all intents and purposes they are purely accidental. To illustrate with an extreme example: when in Bodmer's *Tarquin*, III, i, ii, the tyrant and his wife Tullia are in the last extreme of anxiety they admit that their only hope is the army miles away; at the word the general of that

army suddenly appears and tells them that the army has gone over to the new republic and will not support them, thus removing the last hope. The author supplies a quasi-motive later when he says that the general is here to report the new oath of the army to the senate. But in the first place, such motivation is tardy and obvious, and therefore unsatisfactory; and secondly, it is insufficient. At the best, accident plays too important a rôle. Such groundless reports occur throughout this period. In *Klementine*, II, xi, there is no reason in the world why the two servants Jakob and Friedrich should be introduced in the scene by themselves. The author advances no reason. He simply desires to present certain matter in a certain light and suddenly introduces the report to serve his own purpose.

With few exceptions such motivation as does appear is external and superficial in nature. There are frequent reports to a superior upon command. Compare Melchior Grimm's *Banise*, or Pitschel's *Darius*. Here military affairs are reported by military men. Or again persons report who have been charged with a duty. It is the exception when a report is psychologically as well as formally justified. Moreover, reports are at times, considered alone, skilfully presented. But taken in their connection as parts of a drama they are without dramatic justification. In the matter of skilfull presentation, aside from motivation, there was great progress in the work of others as well as in that of Lessing.

With Lessing the report is an organic part of the action. The foundation is carefully laid so that not only the use of a report upon a particular occasion, but the use and conduct of the particular report is thoroughly and psychologically motivated. Consider how correctly and carefully<sup>1</sup> Marinelli's report of his latest *coup* has been planned and prepared for.

In all the reports considered the action makes progress, but nowhere with more sureness and with less machinery than in Lessing's dramas.

#### 4. *Length of Individual Reports*

Many conditions work together to increase the length of individual reports. Brief mention of some of them follows.

<sup>1</sup> *Emilia*, III, i.

Note the differences between long reports among themselves. Some are nothing but report, giving full details and making no pretense or attempt at concealment; others, intended to be less purely narrative, have a different machinery for reporting. Now the "machinery" has to be included here as a part of the report, for that constitutes the manner of the report. The actual data communicated cannot be lifted out and considered without the setting. It is just the setting that is of interest, so that a garrulous person may require half a page with several speeches to convey to us information that conceivably could be given much more compactly. This effort to secure verisimilitude (*Wahrscheinlichkeit*) accounts for the length of many of the later reports.

If the action reported is long or important or detailed, the report is usually long, even where the style of the author is terse and suggestive.<sup>1</sup>

Attempts at elaborate technique, such as have been discussed above, to give the report dramatic effectiveness, usually resulted in greater length of the report.

The elaborate diction of the Alexandrine plays carried through the reports gave them often bombastic emptiness; many words, little content. The possibilities for high-sounding phrases were exhausted. Thus, *Cato*, II, vii, the simple report is in effect complete in the last line of the report: "Und kurz: es zeigt sich ein allgemeiner Friede." Yet this simple statement is expanded into eleven lines.

More frequently in Bodmer's plays than elsewhere, the reports of action are made the framework for moralizing and philosophizing remarks by the characters. For to Bodmer the expression of patriotic sentiment and philosophy was the real end of play-writing. The introduction of so much reflection resulted in drawing out the length of the report.

The growing use of conversational style in reports and the employment of garrulous persons to recount action not seen on the stage indicate one phase of the attempt at truthful imitation (*Wahrscheinlichkeit*), which motivates in many cases the length of reports. Some characteristic of the bearer of the report is sufficiently emphasized

<sup>1</sup> E.g., *Emilia*, II, vi.

throughout the drama to give foundation to the length of his reports; so the talkative Frau Drummer in *Der Misztrauische gegen sich selbst*, the solicitous Fredegunde in *Vitichab*, the crafty and relentlessly logical Ulysses in the *Trojanerinnen*, the unsophisticated and timorous Emilia, and others, both in the comedy and the tragedy. These characters consistently bear throughout the reports the traits which appear elsewhere in the drama, and which motivate to a certain degree the technique and therefore the length of the report. Such motivation gives a psychological justification of the length of reports.

As to the length of individual speeches in reports, there seems to be a loose agreement with the character of the bearer of the report, greatly modified on occasion by the matter to be reported. Thus reports of soldiers are usually brief and pointed. But in Brawe's *Brutus*<sup>1</sup> the tribune's one speech of thirty-five lines falls out of the rôle.

Here again, with the increased use of the conversational style, the tendency becomes apparent in the reports to make a single speech consist of one or two ideas rather than of a whole paragraph;<sup>2</sup> and, especially in Lessing, to present the essentials only of the report in words, but suggestively, leaving the rest to be felt by intuition, in place of broad narration. Compare, for instance, Angelo's account of the attack on the carriage,<sup>3</sup> or Marinelli's report of the arranged plan,<sup>4</sup> with the shepherd's account in Elias Schlegel's *Orest*<sup>5</sup> of Orest's attack upon the herdsman's boy. To be sure the marvelous terseness of Lessing's diction in *Emilia Galotti* is characteristic only of himself, and is in some instances too epigrammatic to be natural. But just such an example was needed to counteract the tendency of the early dramatists to broad circumstantiality.

#### 5, 6. *The Number of Individual Reports; Their Extent Compared with That of the Whole Drama*

The number of reports, long or short, made use of, and the proportion of the reports to the whole drama depend upon both the subject-matter of the play and the technique chosen.

<sup>1</sup> IV, ii.

<sup>2</sup> Even when the speech is long, the individual sentences composing it are short, and comparatively free from dependent clauses. The use of syncopated sentences is frequent. Cf. *Emilia*, II, vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Emilia*, III, ii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III, i.

<sup>5</sup> II, v.



The proportion of the drama devoted to narrative presentation of action, counting in of necessity the machinery used in the technique of the report, varies greatly not only with different authors of the same period, but even in different plays of the same author. Thus Gottsched's *Cato* contains about 75 lines, his *Agis* about 365 lines of report out of 1,500 hexameters. Ephr. Krüger's *Vitichab* has about 290 lines, his *Mahomed IV* about 115 lines of narrative. Melchior Grimm's *Banise* uses only about 35 lines of report. Aside from his *Karl von Burgund* (one-fourth report), Bodmer's plays vary in amount of report from one line in *Timoleon* (44 pages) to fourteen pages in *Brutus* (100 pages). Elias Schlegel's plays, both comedies and tragedies, have little report, the comedy *Der Geheimnissvolle* heading the list with 68 lines. Chrn. Krüger uses little. Weisse's comedies range from nothing in four short ones to 50 lines in *Der Projektmacher*. In his tragedies 11 is the least and 177 the greatest number of lines.

In Lessing's early plays there is little report with the exception of *Der junge Gelehrte*, with about 90 lines. In *Miss Sara* there is somewhat more report, and in *Emilia* much more.

Shallow imitators as well as careful students of Lessing vary greatly in this regard. The young Goethe in his *Götz* makes very great use of the narrative. The actor Brandes uses comparatively little, and the younger Stephanie likewise.

Thus not much regularity can be discovered in the proportion of reports to the whole drama. More can be said of the number and proportion of long and short reports, in the plays mentioned above, for instance. For in general it is true that the proportion of long reports tends to become smaller with the tendency to introduce conversational technique, especially in comedy. However, very long reports occur at times, as in *Emilia*, II, vi. But in Gebler's *Adelheid* or in his *Klementine* there are many short communications. Not much more than a general tendency becomes clear here.

More distinctly noticeable is the inclination to distribute reports over more space, or throughout a conversation, rather than to introduce them as a compact narrative.

#### 7. *Distribution of Reports in the Drama*

It is of interest to note how reports are distributed in the drama, whether they are scattered uniformly throughout the whole drama,

or especially grouped in some particular act or scene, or at the beginning or end of act or scene; and what principles, if any, govern such distribution. This applies also to the parceling out of details of one and the same report to several individuals, extending through several scenes, thus making one report consist of a group of partial reports.

It seems to be only accidental that reports should occur with approximately the same frequency in the different scenes of the same act, or in the different acts, excluding the "exposition." Such division seldom occurs. The usage appears to be: where there is much action there are either many or long reports. This is natural in a time when the stage presented the *feelings of individuals under certain circumstances* rather than their action under those conditions. This principle applies to Gottsched and his followers, to Bodmer, to Cronegk, to Wieland and Klopstock, in large measure to Weisse (with the exception in a certain sense of *Jean Calas*), as well as to Lessing's early dramas. Elias Schlegel must be reckoned as belonging to this list also.

Further it is characteristic of the French Alexandrine drama and hence of most of the German drama during the first half of this period<sup>1</sup> that much of the so-called action occurs at the very last of the play, *in the fifth act*, indeed. Thus in Weisse's *Richard III*, of a total of 11 reports of 177 lines in all, 8 reports and 138 lines are found in Act V. In Gottsched's *Agis*, of a total of 330 lines reported, 135 are in Act V. Of these 32 are in the very last scene. This is very natural, for the fate of the king had to be reported to his anxiously waiting wife, not to mention the audience. The same principle holds true of Gottsched's *Cato*, of Pitschel's *Darius*, of Krüger's *Vitichab*, and of his *Mahomed*. Here about as much is reported in Act V as elsewhere altogether. In Gebler's *Adelheid* 5 reports of 24 lines occur in Act V, more reports and more lines than elsewhere. In his *Klementine* there is nearly twice as much report in V as in III, the next in rank. Thus although Gebler's tragedies are prose, and an attempt is made at extreme verisimilitude in conversation in reports and elsewhere, Gebler seems to be overcome by the mass of detail, and where there is most detail, there he makes the most use of reports.

So much was the fifth act burdened with "action," that in spite

<sup>1</sup> Especially before 1755. But such conservative writers as Weisse continued this practice for many years after the appearance of *Miss Sara Sampson*.

of a change of scene in that act, more had to be reported still than in the other acts. In the often-cited *Agis* of Gottsched, the end came elsewhere than on the stage and had to be reported; likewise in Weisse's *Richard III*. But this was felt to be less effective than to have the end seen upon the stage. Weisse therefore changes the scene in the last act of the *Befreyung von Theben*. But even then he uses three reports, in all 72 lines, to gather up the threads and close the action. In his *Krispus*, published the same year (1764), he actually takes us into the prison to the deathbed of Krispus. But here we still have two reports of 16 lines in all.

Depending upon the principle stated above that most "dramatists" of this period preferred to present the sensations rather than the action of men, is the following detail of technique, often made use of. A part of the action occurs elsewhere than on the stage and is reported by some character with many words and much show of sentiment, frequently calling out expressions of like nature from the hearers. Plans are then made for further action, which in its turn takes place elsewhere than on stage, only to be reported back to a similar consultation. Since in this period the division of a play into scenes corresponded with the entrance or exit of a character, it follows that when this person comes to bring a report, the report naturally comes early in the scene. Thus to cite one example for a great many: in Pitschel's *Darius* (1752), scene after scene is opened by a report: II, i; III, i, ii, iii; IV, ii, iv, vi; V, i, ii, iii. The few words of introduction serve, where they occur, as transitions from what has just preceded to the report itself. A number of these reports furnish the material and determine the character of the whole scene, and often of the whole situation consisting of several scenes.

This last principle is more evident in reports which open acts and in doing so furnish the energy and determine the direction of the action for the given act. In *Darius*, cited above, notice that Acts, II, III, V open with reports, and these reports are among the longest and most important of the play. In Gottsched's *Agis*, of 90 lines of report in the second act, 78 lines occur in scene i; out of 54 in Act IV, 35 are in the first scene; and of 135 in V, 85 are found at the beginning of the act. The reason is simple. The division into acts corresponds to stages in the working out of the

action. In these older dramas the division was rather into situations calling for the expression of sentiment of some kind. The natural starting-point of such situations or successions of minor situations would be some new and important event, some *coup* of the enemy, a battle, a duel, or the like. Hence a long report at the beginning of the divisions into acts, describing the important action which motivates the succeeding situation. Thus in Brawe's *Brutus*<sup>1</sup> a report of two lines by the old man, Senilius, introduces us to a new part or division of the action, the battle itself. This short report is complemented by the long one in the following scene, and the subject of the battle, then, fills the whole act.

Lessing in his *Emilia Galotti* has refined this technique essentially and in two instances uses the report to give the ground tone, the theme of a whole act. Act III opens, after an introduction, with a report of Marinelli's new scheme to gain possession of the person of Emilia; and the whole act concerns itself with just that, and stops as soon as possible after that is effected, namely, when Claudia rushes into the inner room to join her daughter; as soon as possible, because it would have been impossible to close the situation before Claudia as well as Count Appiani had been temporarily disposed of. Act V opens with Marinelli's report of Odoardo's attempts to control himself before re-entering the house to regain possession of his daughter, and his unsuccessful effort to this end entirely fills out the fifth act.

Moreover, Lessing made these reports more concrete and effective by the introduction of some action observed from the stage. This point will be taken up under the discussion of "alarms," so called.

This instance may be used to illustrate in what way and how fundamentally Lessing's technique of reports differed from that of his predecessors. While retaining the older technique where it was serviceable, he removed the emphasis from unimportant externalities to vital, human interests, from wordy expression of sentiment to the reality of action, from the reflection of completed action, in the feeling of individuals, to the actual stress of conflict. He gave an inner motivation to the forms which he retained. In determining what shall be reported and not seen in his later dramas, there is evident the same keen power of discernment of that which is essential,

<sup>1</sup> IV, i.

as will be seen later. In this particular detail of technique Lessing uses the report effectively to *introduce* the ensuing *action* of the division or act. His predecessors generally used the report at the beginning of the act not simply to make a new stage or new turn of the action but primarily to *present* the action itself.

Much less often than at the beginning of scenes, occur reports at the end of scenes. Such technique is more difficult, inasmuch as more skill is required to lead up to a well-prepared climax than to come forth bluntly with the news, and let the situation work itself out as it will. In the report of Gundomad, already referred to in Krüger's *Vitichab*, there is a formal approximation to this technique, when Gundomad, approaching the camp of the Germans sadly, with news of victory but also of the death of Vitichab, is at first reproached with being a coward fleeing from the battle. After this a dialogue ensues between him and Siegmar, in which he upbraids the latter for bringing false news. Here and there the victory is indicated, but the full report comes only toward the end.<sup>1</sup>

Contrast with this rather superficial technique the diabolical cleverness of Marinelli<sup>2</sup> as he first drives the prince to despair, then secures permission to undertake any measure which will be effective, with the pledge in advance of immunity from punishment in case of unfortunate event. And just in time. For almost immediately a shot is heard, and Marinelli's plan, already put into effect, is reported as it is being executed. Here is no mere attempt at formal climax, by leaving an important communication till it has been carefully prepared for; on the contrary, the psychological interest grows with the presentation.

More often than at the end of scenes, reports occur in the last scenes of acts. Again to cite one example for all: in Weisse's *Richard III*, we learn V, vi, that Richmond has beaten Richard's army in battle, but it is only with the appearance of Richmond himself for the first time, in the very last scene, that we hear of the death of Richard—a tame account as compared with Shakespeare's *Richard III*.

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<sup>1</sup> III, v.

<sup>2</sup> *Emilia*, III, i.